

REMARKS

This paper is intended to be a complete response to the above-identified Office Action. It is believed no fee is due. If fees are required, however, the Commissioner is authorized to deduct the necessary charges from Deposit Account 501922/149-0017US.

Claims 14 and 19 have been amended. Claims 1-13, 17 and 23 have been cancelled without prejudice to their underlying subject matter or their continued prosecution in a continuation application. Accordingly, eight (8) claims are currently pending in the instant patent application (claims 14-16, and 18-22).

Drawings

The drawing sheets attached as part of this Reply's Appendix consist of substitute formal drawings for those drawings originally filed with the above-identified application. None of the substitute drawings add new matter, nor do they delete matter necessary for Assignee to meet its obligations under 35 U.S.C. 112.

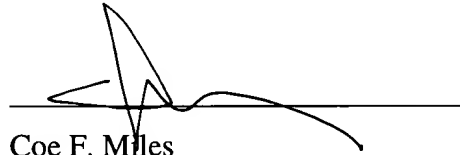
Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has objected to claims 17, 18, 22 and 23 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. (Office Action dated 30 March 2004 at page 5.) The subject matter of originally filed claim 17 has been incorporated into independent claim 14. Similarly, the subject matter of originally filed claim 23 has been incorporated into independent claim 19. Claims 17 and 23 have been cancelled without prejudice to their continued prosecution in a continuation application. Accordingly, claims 14-16, and 18-22 are believed to be in condition for immediate allowance. Such action is respectfully requested.

Reconsideration of the pending claims 14-16, and 18-22, in light of the above remarks and amendments is respectfully requested. If, after considering this reply, the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would be beneficial towards advancing this case to allowance, the Examiner is strongly encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney at the number listed.

12 MAY 2004

Date



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